



Texas Talks – Maintaining Traditions

While life can change quickly with an unexpected event or challenge, certain things stay constant. The traditions we practice together can be steady lights in our lives, giving warmth and structure to our experiences. Regardless of a family's composition — a mom and dad, stepparents, grandparents, foster families or a community of close friends — these practices tell our stories and reflect our group identity.

Traditions are more than just holiday celebrations. Traditions, which can start in childhood or later in life, are forms of communication and symbolism. They allow us to relate to our loved ones on a deeper level. Reports show that groups who practice traditions feel closer and enjoy their time together more. The types of traditions have no impact on this outcome, but the number of traditions do.

Small everyday traditions — eating dinner together or bedtime rituals — offer comfort and security through consistency. Annual traditions, like holiday recipes or photos on the first day of school, teach family values and heritage. Traditions associated with life events (weddings, retirements, funerals, etc.) strengthen social bonds and create intergenerational connections.

Talking about maintaining family traditions may be a sensitive topic, especially if your older loved ones currently have major roles in these practices. Let them know that this effort is not about someone taking control of the traditions, it's about preserving them for future generations. You can begin the process by identifying your family's everyday and annual traditions.

When talking with an older loved one, ask them to share why a tradition started and why it is important to keep it going. You can discuss the traditions that are meaningful to you along with their history. It may be helpful to discuss documenting them. End by making a plan to involve younger members of your family or community so they can carry traditions into the future.

There are many ways to maintain your traditions through the years. Need some ideas? Try the following activities.

- Write down recipes to create a cookbook.
- Share and document traditions during a reunion.
- Create and maintain genealogical records or a family tree.
- Sew a quilt with each square illustrating a cherished tradition.
- Invite family or community members to discuss the history and meaning behind their favorite traditions.

Learn More

- [StoryCorps'](#) (link is external) mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.
- Learn about [Community Life and Celebration](#) (link is external) on the American Folklife Center website.

Start the conversation. Use the maintaining traditions and family activity worksheet to help guide your conversation with your loved one.

Maintaining Traditions Worksheet

Life can be ever-changing and filled with unexpected events and challenges. However, certain things — like the traditions we hold together as families — stay constant. Many families have yet to define their traditions or establish a plan for passing them on through the generations. Are you and your older loved ones ready to share and preserve your important family traditions?

1. Which daily traditions are meaningful to you?

(Examples: eating dinner together, a unique greeting, bedtime rituals, etc.)

2. Which annual traditions are meaningful to you?

(Examples: holiday recipes, yearly resolutions, seasonal events, etc.)

3. Which traditions associated with life events are meaningful to you?

(Consider rituals associated with weddings, retirement, loss of a loved one, etc.)

4. Who plans or carries out the traditions you listed above?

(Does one person have a major role or does everyone share the responsibility?)

Maintaining Traditions Family Activity

Review this worksheet with your family before holding a conversation about maintaining family traditions. Whether you will be talking with an older loved one or an older adult in the community, take a moment to come together and get ready.

1. Discussion question: What are some of your favorite family traditions?

Activity: Have each family member share a favorite family memory. Do you consider any of those a family tradition? Ask your older loved one to share the history and purpose behind your favorite family tradition.

2. Discussion question: How do you document or maintain family traditions? (*Examples: recipe books, family reunions, quilting, family discussions, etc.*)

Activity: Create a collage together that represents your family. Include pictures of hobbies you like to do together as a family and pictures that represent your favorite family memories.

3. Discussion question: How will your family maintain its traditions for many years to come?

Activity: Create a memory book that covers the history of one of your family traditions. Include pictures, copies of recipes and anything that will help future generations have a visual representation of your traditions.

Conservar las tradiciones. Hoja de trabajo

La vida es siempre cambiante y está llena de sucesos y desafíos inesperados. Sin embargo, algunas cosas, como las tradiciones que observamos juntos en familia, permanecen constantes. Muchas familias aún tienen que definir sus tradiciones o crear un plan para transmitirlas a las generaciones jóvenes. ¿Están usted y sus seres queridos mayores listos para compartir y preservar sus tradiciones importantes de familia?

1. ¿Qué tradiciones diarias son importantes para usted?

(Por ejemplo: cenar juntos, saludarse de manera especial, las costumbres o rituales a la hora de dormir, etcétera).

2. ¿Qué tradiciones anuales son importantes para usted?

(Por ejemplo: preparar comidas especiales para las fiestas, las resoluciones del año nuevo, los eventos de la estación, etcétera).

3. ¿Qué tradiciones ligadas a grandes acontecimientos de la vida son importantes para usted?

(Considere los rituales propios de las bodas, la jubilación, la pérdida de un ser querido, etcétera).

4. ¿Quién planifica o se encarga de que se cumplan las tradiciones mencionadas anteriormente?

(¿Tiene una persona determinada un papel importante o todos comparten la responsabilidad?).

Actividad en familia para conservar las tradiciones

Repase esta hoja de trabajo con su familia antes de tener una conversación sobre las tradiciones familiares. Ya sea que vaya a hablar con un ser querido mayor o una persona mayor de la comunidad, tómese un momento para organizarse y prepararse.

1. Pregunta para conversar: ¿Cuáles son sus tradiciones de familia favoritas?

Actividad: Pida que cada miembro de la familia comparta un recuerdo favorito. ¿Considera que alguno de esos recuerdos es una tradición familiar? Pídale a su ser querido mayor que comparta la historia y el propósito de su tradición familiar favorita.

2. Pregunta para conversar: ¿Cómo documenta o mantiene las tradiciones familiares? (*Por ejemplo: libros de recetas, reuniones familiares, coser colchas, tener conversaciones en familia, etcétera*).
Actividad: Crean juntos un collage que represente a su familia. Incluya fotos de los pasatiempos que disfrutan en familia y fotos que representen sus recuerdos familiares favoritos.

3. Pregunta para conversar: ¿Cómo mantendrá su familia las tradiciones en los años venideros?

Actividad: Cree un libro de recuerdos que cuente la historia de una de sus tradiciones de familia. Incluya fotos, copias de recetas y cualquier cosa que ayude a las generaciones futuras a tener una representación visual de sus costumbres y tradiciones.